

Discussion Questions – Study on Pierce County Shelter:

For additional background, see the current LWVUS positions, attached. The current LWVT-PC position on affordable housing is at

http://www.tacomapiercelwv.org/files/position_on_affordable_housing.pdf.

Policies and Funding Regarding Low Income Housing Development

Which policies to promote expansion of shelter options for low-income and extremely low-income people should Pierce County and its municipalities adopt, if any?

- Invest in publicly owned housing for low-income people
- Zone for additional density
- Incentivize shared housing programs
- Housing First
- Tiny House Villages
- The Community Solutions organization approach
- Expanded Land Bank for low-income housing
- Transfer of publicly held property to Land Trusts dedicated to sheltering extremely low income people
- Reserve multi-family property tax exemption (and similar incentives) for development of low-income housing
- Inclusive development
 - Regulation of land speculation
 - Community benefits agreements
 - Land value capture

Homeless Shelter Programs

On which specific homelessness reduction models should Pierce County and its municipalities focus, if any? And why?

- Self-managed tent cities
- Municipally-managed tent cities
- Safe lots (for people living in vehicles)
- Established low rent campgrounds
- Centralized, large capacity shelters
- Distributed, small capacity shelters

Regulating Use of Public Space

Which of the following measures do you support? Why?

- Removal of criminal penalties related to outdoor camping
 - Decriminalize trespass if sleeping or resting on public property
 - Disallow impound of vehicles if the vehicle is used for sleeping
- Removal of civil penalties (such as fines and tickets) for behaviors necessary for human survival
- Designate certain undeveloped public property - in Pierce County and its municipalities- for urban camping.

Tenant Protections

Which tenant protections do you support? Why?

- Rent stabilization
- Just cause eviction
- Ban the box for housing

Levels of Government Responsibility

Reviewing the measures and policies above that you support, who should be responsible and how?

- Federal government
- State government
- County government
- Municipal government
- Public and private non-profit sector (including faith based organizations)

Funding

How should Pierce County and its municipalities fund the services they provide to:

- People at risk of losing their housing
- People who are experiencing homelessness

National LWV Positions – from Impact on Issues, 2018-2020

Meeting Basic Human Needs

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty.

Persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care. (see attached National LWV Positions – from Impact on Issues, 2018-2020)

Housing Recommendations (p. 84)

As a member of the Low-Income Housing Coalition's Women and Housing Task Force, LWVUS endorsed recommendations predicated on the conviction that every person and family should have decent, safe, and affordable housing. State and local Leagues have worked to increase the supply of low and moderate-income housing through efforts to change zoning laws and to set up shared housing services.

Fair Housing Criteria (p. 74)

The following criteria should be applied to programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination:

- Opportunities for purchase or renting of homes, and for borrowing money for housing should not be restricted because of discriminatory reasons such as race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.
- Responsibility in the nationwide effort to achieve equality of opportunity for access to housing resides with government at all levels and with the private sector—builders, lending institutions, realtors, labor unions, business and industry, news media, civic organizations, educational institutions, churches, and private citizens.
- The continued existence of patterns of discrimination depends on the covert support of community leaders, institutions, and residents. Award or withdrawal of federal contracts and placement of federal installations should be used as levers to change this covert support.
- After positive steps such as mediation and conciliation have been exhausted, the federal government should have the option for selective withholding of federal funds where patterns of discrimination in access to housing occur. In applying the option to withhold funds, the federal government should weigh the effects of its actions on the welfare of lower-income and minority groups.
- Federal programs should include provisions to guarantee equal opportunity for access to housing. Federal funds should not be used to perpetuate discrimination.
- In the enforcement of fair-housing laws, speedy resolution should be ensured. Administrative procedures and responsibilities should be clearly defined and widely publicized.
- Mediation and legal redress should be readily available. The process should ensure every possible protection for both complainant and persons or institutions against whom complaints are lodged. Avenues for mediation and legal redress should be widely publicized and should be easily accessible.
- Funding should be adequate to provide trained and competent staff for public education to inform citizens of the provisions of fair-housing legislation, of their fair-housing rights and of procedures to be followed in securing them. Adequate funding should also be available for mediation and for all aspects of speedy enforcement.
- There should be continued evaluation to provide a basis for revision and strengthening of all procedures so that equality of opportunity for access to housing can be accomplished.